

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks**  
1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701  
(406) 444-2452

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

**1. Type of proposed Action:** Building of Three Shooting Ranges & Further improvements on existing shooting complex.

**2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges); MCA87-2-105 (Department may expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

**3. Project Title:** Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex, Inc. (GFSSC)  
2611 – 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Suite 2, PMB 273  
Great Falls, MT 59405

**4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**  
Terry Hill  
24 Shamrock Lane  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
406-454-0534

**Resolution Date:** June 27, 2005

**5. Cooperating Agencies or Groups:**

Sportsmen Clubs: Safari Club, National Rifle Association, Montana Wildlife Federation, Mule Deer Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Walleye's Unlimited.

Shooting Sports: Missouri River Shooters, Sun River Skeet Club, Russell Country Sportsmen, Russell Country Sportsmen, Ed McGiveran Pistol Club, Montana Plainsman Black Powder Club.

Government/Corporate Sponsors: PPL Montana, Cascade County, City of Great Falls, Three Rivers Communication

Law Enforcement: Great Falls City Police, Montana Highway Patrol, US Border Patrol, Montana CIB, Montana Probation & Parole, Malmstrom AFB Security Force, Montana Law Enforcement Academy, Cascade County

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Sheriff, FWP Law Enforcement, US Marshall Service, FBI, US Customs, US Fish & Wildlife Service, BIA  
Youth Education: 4H Shooting Program, Olympic Shooting Program, FWP Hunter Safety Program.  
Fish Wildlife & Parks as owner of the majority of the property to be leased to a Board of Directors of the Great  
 Falls Shooting Sports Complex, Inc.

**6. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** Three mile north of Great Falls, Montana. Approximately 942.37 acres off of Ryan Dam Road. Formerly the Beckman property with unnamed butte on north edge of the property known locally as Radio Tower Hill from the microwave relay towers on top. Of the 942.37 acres, 582.37 are owned by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the remaining 360 acres is owned by GFSSC.

FWP: Township 21 North, Range 4 East, M.P.M.  
Section 15: NW $\frac{1}{4}$  ; Section 16: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

GFSSC: Township 21 North, Range 4 East, M.P.M.  
Section 15: NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; Section 16: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

## 7. Maps:

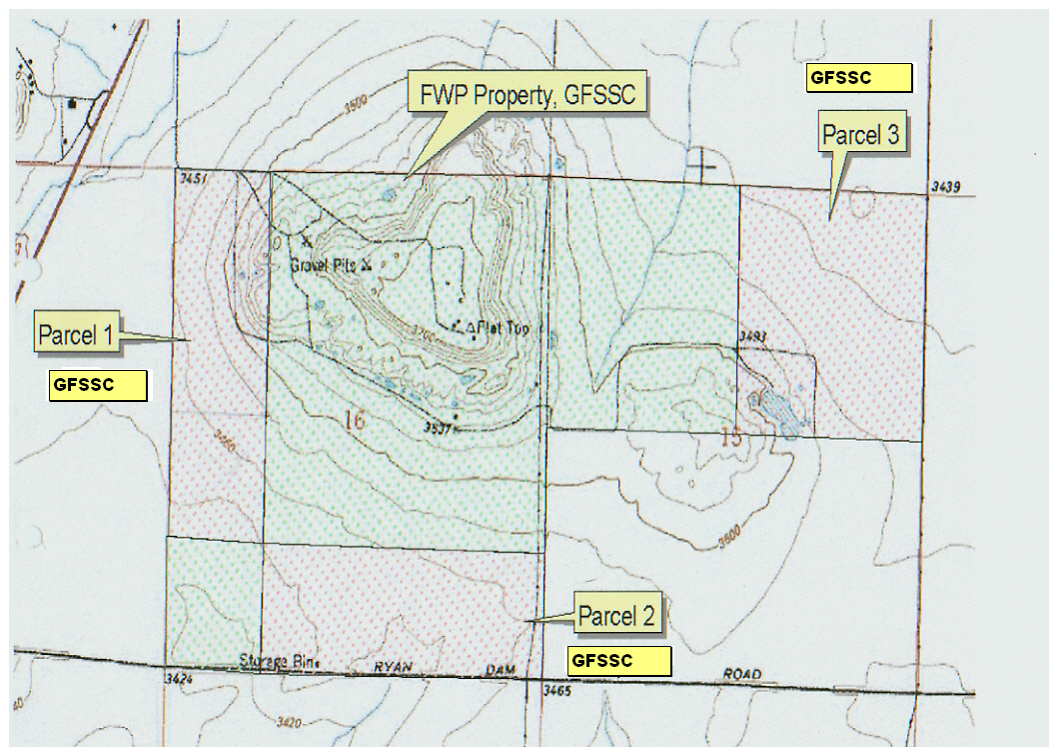
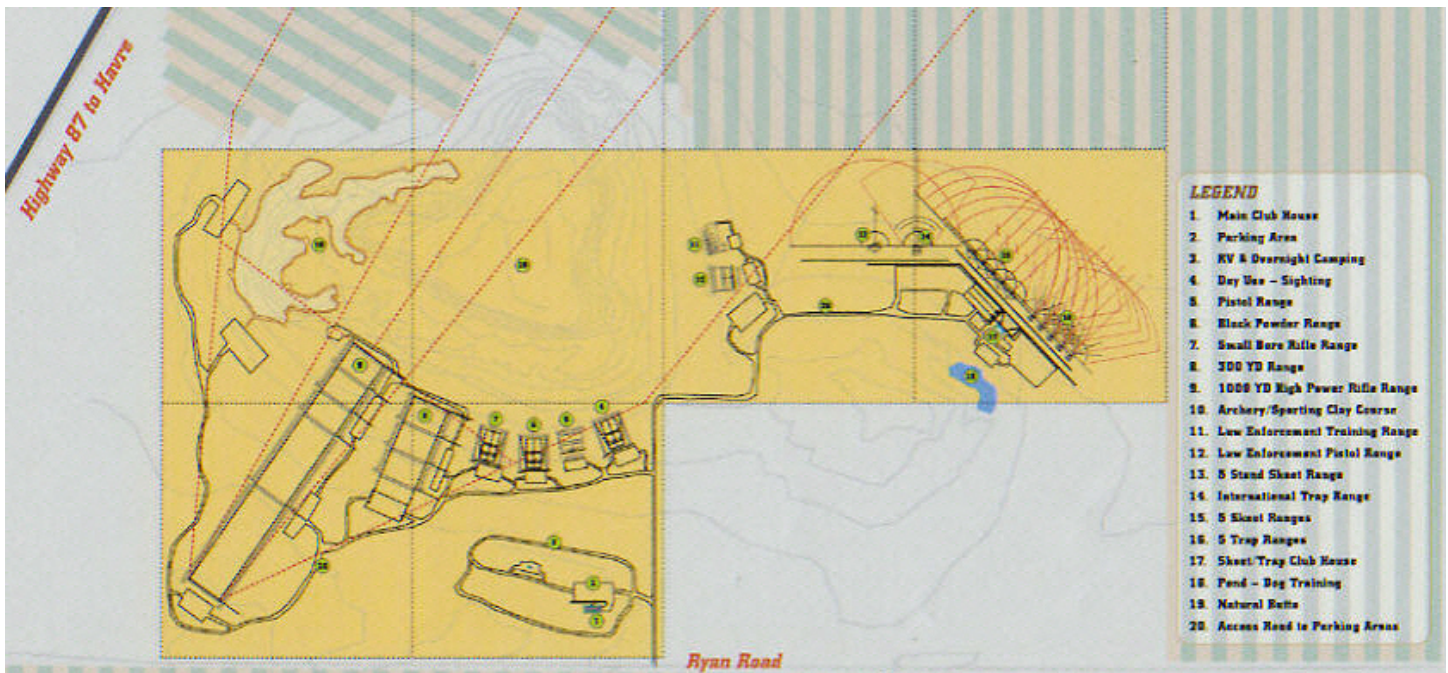


Figure 1 - "Tower Butte" showing land ownership between FWP & GFSSC.

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**Figure 2 – Google Earth Image of GFSSC**



**Figure 3 – Proposed GFSSC Shooting Sports Complex (CTA Architects Engineers)**

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## **8. Description of Project:**

FY 2005-2006 and 2006-2007: (a) Development of an all weather road system. (b) Finish construction of perimeter fence and gates. (c) Installation of pumpable vault toilets at all range sites. (d) Development of a 200 meter baffled public shooting range. (e) Development of a 50-meter youth/family/training range. (f) Begin development of a 5 station skeet range.

Alternate Projects to be considered during this time if money becomes available: (a) Development of 500 meter Silhouette range. Development of a 50-meter pistol range. (b) Development of a 100 meter small bore rifle/black powder range. (c) Development of a 1000-yard high power range. (d) Development of wells.

## **Specific Actions:**

### **Priority 1 100/200 yard public shooting range**

The development of a 200 yard public shooting range will consist of:

Cut and fill approximately 36,000 cubic yards of earth

Construction of 10 station firing lines consisting of cement shooting pads, installation of shooting benches and graveled shooting lanes,

Construction of 10' high side safety berms,

Construction of a 20' minimum high impact berm

The public shooting range will be baffled to alleviate safety issues with the communication towers on top of the butte.

This range will be handicapped accessible

A pre-fabricated restroom facility would be located to the southeast of this facility.

### **Priority 2 Development of a five-station skeet range**

Development of five-station skeet houses

Cut and fill approximately 40,000 cubic yards

Construct road system to Skeet range

Installation of electricity to Skeet range

### **Priority 3 Development of a youth/family training range**

The Development of a 50-meter rim fire only youth/family training range. All parties agree the 50-meter rim fire only family/training range and the 100-meter small bore/black powder range or the 100/200 meter public range should be built concurrently because the dirt work required to construct the berms is most economically excavated from 100 to 150 meters behind the proposed location of both ranges.

The youth/family training fire range will be separated from other firing lines by a surrounding dirt berm. The rim fire only youth/family range will have 10 covered firing points located on a pea-gravel platform.

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Construction of one permanent target backer with target high impact berms at the 15-meter (also serves a 50 foot range), two permanent target backers with target high impact berms at the 25-meter line and 2 permanent target backers at the 50 meter line.

A pre-fabricated restroom facility would be located to the southeast of this facility.

The Board of Directors has also looked at long-term goals and the following ranges and projects will also be completed over the next five to ten years.

#### **Priority 4 Development of a 500-meter large bore and a 100- meter small bore silhouette ranges**

Construction of a 500-meter silhouette range requires little effort after the dirt work is completed.

The 500-meter silhouette range would include target rails with impact berms located at 200, 300, 385 and 500 meters for high power, black powder cartridge and military silhouette sporting events.

Target rails with impact berms at 40, 60, 77 and 100 yards would serve the small bore shooters and target rails and impact berms located at various distance between 100 and 200 meters would serve the handgun silhouette shooters.

Purchase of two sets of silhouettes for the range

A pre-fabricated restroom facility would be located to the southeast of this facility.

Expected completion date      2006-2007

#### **Priority 5 Development of a 100 yard small bore rifle range/Black powder range**

Cut and fill approximately 15,000 cubic yards of earth. A 15 station shooting range consisting of covered cement firing lines, shooting benches, graveled shooting lanes

A pre-fabricated restroom facility would be located to the southeast of this facility.

#### **Priority 6 Fencing of the property owned by FWP and the GFSSC**

Secure area and prevent ingress and egress onto and from neighboring properties

Approximately six miles of fencing and four gates will be needed to fence and secure the 947 acres site.

*Approximately 1.5 miles of fencing has been completed at this time*

#### **Priority 7 The development of a 50 yard-pistol range**

Cut and fill approximately 10,000 cubic yards of earth

A 10 station shooting range consisting of cement shooting pads, shooting benches, graveled shooting lanes

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At least one of the ranges will be handicapped accessible  
A pre-fabricated restroom facility would be located to the southeast of this facility

Estimated completion date 2007-2008

**Priority 8 Develop of an all weather road system to the individual ranges**

.5 miles of roadway will be developed leading to the Sun River Skeet ranges  
1/8 miles of roadway will need to be constructed to the 50-meter youth/family plinking range  
1/8 mile of roadway will need to be constructed to the 100/200-meter public shooting range

*The roadway into the 300-yard rifle range is complete at this time*

**Priority 9 The drilling of a well to provide a palatable source of drinking water**

*The well is estimated to be at least 800' deep in order to obtain potable water*

**Priority 10 Construction of a 1000 - yard shooting range facility**

Cut and fill approximately 100,000 cubic yard of dirt  
Construction of an 8' x 120' retaining wall  
Construction of a 4' x 120' Deck  
Footings for retaining wall and decking 14" x 16" x 120'  
(See Appendix F for construction design)  
108 cubic yards of cement @ \$80/yard for footings,  
Decking, retaining wall and target carriers  
20 firing positions with one designed handicap accessible  
Building material cost for restroom

**Priority 11 Construction of a 2400 - 3000 square foot community shooting sports and educational meeting room ideal for hunter education training and shooting sports safety education**

The building would be used as an education and training facility. The building would be designed to be expanded to include an indoor small bore shooting range.

**Priority 12 Development of an armory for the facility to secure shooting range equipment and supplies**

**10. Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction:** None

**11. Listing of an Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has**

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**Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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None (Exempted by County for FWP property, GFSSC pays property taxes on its portion)

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Up to \$75,000

**12. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Reference previous Environmental Assessment of Dec. 2001 for Acquisition of a Community Shooting Range.

**PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

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## A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				1b.
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

1b. Soil disruption is minimal for this site and is very localized. Erosion control measures in effect and/or disturbed areas to be reseeded.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	Comment
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2. <u>AIR</u>	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated *	Index
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

This area is in attainment for air quality. The proposed alternative does not directly impact air quality on or near the proposed area.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	Comment
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3. <u>WATER</u>	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated*	Index
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				3g.
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				3h
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

Under the proposed construction and operation of the shooting ranges, it is not expected to directly or indirectly affects the water resources of Montana.

3b. To preclude additional runoff and siltation of area waters, all disturbed areas will be reseeded and monitored for erosion. Reseeding will be with native short-grass prairie & CRP species with some alfalfa added for soil improvement.

3g. There are about a dozen temporary waterholes on the property that collect rain and snowmelt, but no permanent surface water sources. The areas primary aquifer is approximately 500 feet beneath the surface with minimal risk of pollution.

3h. Lead from shot and bullets will be deposited on or in the soil predominately at the shotgun, but also the rifle

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and pistol ranges. The amount of lead that may be dissolved in water is determined primarily by the pH of the water. If lead is dissolved in water, the amount of lead that attaches to the soil and the amount that enters the ground water are determined by several major factors, including:

1. *How acidic or alkaline the soil is.* Lead tends to become more mobile at pHs below 6.5 and above 8.5. Lead tends to be relatively inactive at pH ranges between 6.5 and 8.5. The soils in the area are around well within this range as are the soils one foot deep and below.
2. *Amount of clay in the soil.* More lead attaches to clay soil than to other soil types. Solid clay layers block water from penetrating deeply into the ground, and thus prevent dissolved lead from reaching the groundwater beneath the clay layer. The soils on both the shotgun and rifle range sites are predominantly clay with a silt mix, which is dense and low in permeability.
3. *Depth to ground water.* The closer the ground water is to the surface, the higher potential for contamination. Ground water depths in this area are relatively deep and part of the Madison Swift Group, averaging 500 feet below the butte. They are confined and protected by bedrock.
4. *Annual precipitation.* The greater the annual precipitation the greater potential for lead to be dissolved in the surface waters. The area of GFSSC is considered arid with a low annual rainfall of 12"-15". This lower precipitation level further slows the dissolving of lead into the water and decreases the potential of either runoff or migration of dissolved lead through the soil.

All these factors on the GFSSC work favorably together to minimize the potential for lead to enter the ground water. Periodically mining the lead, as is done on many heavily used shotgun ranges, is part of the GFSSC management plan. Lead levels will be monitored and any other special lead management techniques implemented as needed.

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4. <b>VEGETATION</b>  Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				4d.
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X			4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

4a. Construction of the shooting ranges results in the elimination of vegetation, within the disturbance areas. However, the areas of the proposed projects occupy a very small portion of the individual properties and native vegetation is minimally present anywhere on the property. Therefore it is determined to have an insignificant impact on native vegetation in the area. However, all disturbed areas will be reseeded with native short grass prairie and/or CRP species increasing the native vegetation on the property. The areas will also be actively monitored for invasive weeds.

4d. Agricultural leases are being pursued to continue dryland farming. Currently 278.07 acres of the property are characterized as too saline or too steep to farm.

4e. Introduction of noxious weed seeds may occur from the soil disturbances during construction and from vehicles that are carrying weed seeds. The increases in traffic to the property therefore have the potential to increase the spread of noxious weeds to the area. Landowners are required to control noxious weeds on their property. The GFSSC weed control program will have all disturbed areas reseeded with native short grass prairie and/or CRP species + alfalfa and they will be closely monitored for weeds with more aggressive weed control in those areas as required. Roads and parking areas will be closely monitored for weed introductions. The established and projected weed control programs on the agricultural leased portions will be the responsibility of the lessee and should further preclude the spread of noxious weeds.

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<b>** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE</b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				See 5b.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5a. The proposed shooting range sites has minimal wildlife habitat available and has some resident upland game birds.

5b. Normally construction and operation of shooting ranges would not have any significant affect on or change in the diversity or abundance of most game animals, nongame species, or bird species. With the addition of water, reseeding to short grass prairie & other CRP species plus the planned windbreaks of trees & shrubs wildlife species should increase on the properties.

## **B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

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6. <b><u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

This is a rural area with a low population density. The GFSSC site is completely surrounded by one farm operation. Nearest neighbor is 1/3 mile on the NW corner on the opposite side of the butte from the range. No significant direct or indirect effects on noise levels are expected under the proposed project. Additionally, the project does not involve the creation of any electrostatic or electromagnetic charges.

6a. All of the neighbors have been contacted about the future construction and operation of the shotgun and rifle ranges. There have been 4 public meetings and 12 other meetings with all of the clubs involved. There were no significant objections to the construction or operations of the range.

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7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

The proposed ranges are to be constructed on a very small portion of land and will not affect any existing land uses nor will they adversely effect or relocate and residences.

7a. The GFSSC area has historically been farmed with portions as no till. Proposed agricultural lease agreements will continue on most of the property with alternating till no till farming on approximately 360 acres.

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8. <b>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

Some potential human health hazards are always possible on shotgun and rifle ranges. However, with the safe construction and operating procedures in this proposal the potential hazard is extremely small. Both of the ranges meet or exceed the standards of design, siting, and safety established by the National Rifle Association (NRA) and National Shooting Sport Foundation for ranges of this type and have been inspected and approved by the NRA technical training specialist. Additionally CTA engineering has been “on-board” with NRA and have researched “best practices” for range operations and has incorporated them into the design and siting of all ranges and facilities.

	<b>IMPACT *</b>	<b>Can</b>	
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\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u></b>						
<b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				9e.

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

9e. There have been 4 public meetings, 12 meetings with shooting clubs, and presentations to the FWP commission discussing land acquisition, leases and complex development plans. Additionally, there have been numerous articles in the Great Falls Tribune and organizational newsletters of the partners and sponsoring groups/agencies.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.		X				
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

The proposed construction of the shooting ranges will not have an effect the governmental services needed in the area and no additional demands would be placed on the local government.

10b. The FWP property is exempted by the county for taxes, but that portion owned by the GFSSC will be liable for all taxes.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)		X				11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

Recreational opportunities would increase dramatically with the construction of the proposed state of the art ranges.

11c. The increased recreational benefits to the community are in providing safe supervised range facilities for Hunter Education training, 4-H shooting sports, Boy Scouts, shooting instructor training, sportsman's clubs, Olympic training, etc., plus the availability of ranges for Federal, State and local law enforcement organizational uses.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. <b>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

There are no known historical, archeological or cultural sites within the proposed area of the project.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

- \* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- \*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- \*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- \*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



<b>13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>  <b>Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)**

- 1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the proposed alternative (construction of the ranges), such as increased recreational opportunities, firearms and hunter safety training, and law enforcement training within the community. The no action alternative would be not to build the shooting ranges and continue on with present activities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities also include occasional shooting activities on existing or other temporary ranges. However, using safely designated, designed and supervised ranges, such as the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Alternatives Considered but Rejected: Prior to selecting the proposed rifle, pistol and shotgun range sites, consultants with expertise in range construction and operations were brought in to assist with site selection for the ranges, in addition to representatives from the shooting club sponsors. Several siting alternatives around the butte were considered for several different types of ranges. Many of these alternatives were rejected with the proposed sites deemed the safest, most efficient and most economical.

- 2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

None Proposed.

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. Due to the minor nature and insignificant effects of the proposed action, this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The strong, positive public comments and attendance at the public hearing, combined with the potential for adding an important resource to the shooting sports and hunter education resources for the Great Falls area and the State of Montana all support the approval of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the construction of the proposed shooting ranges and range improvements for the Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex.

## **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

An EIS is not required. There were no significant environmental or economic impacts discovered in the assessment process.

- 2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

Extensive public involvement with 4 public meetings, 12 meetings with shooting clubs, and also presentations to the FWP commission discussing land acquisition, leases and complex development plans. Additionally, there have been numerous articles in the Great Falls Tribune and organizational newsletters of the partners and sponsoring groups/agencies.

- 3. Duration of comment period, if any.**

- 4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Gene R. Hickman  
Wildlife Biologist and Sole Proprietor of  
Ecological Assessments  
8842 Douglas Circle  
Helena, MT 59602  
(406) 458-3884

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO**

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? NO**

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action when alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider. Include a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** NONE

**List proposed mitigative measures (stipulations) for license:** NONE

**Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Terry Hill, GFSSC

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN  
Ecological Assessments

Date Completed: August 21, 2005

### **PART 3. DECISION**

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

Describe public involvement, if any: